

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method to screen for ~~diagnosing~~ a breast, ovarian, bladder, colon, or lung cancer in a human mammal, comprising:

a) determining sphingosine kinase 1 (SPHK1) gene copy number in a test sample from a region of the human mammal that is suspected to be precancerous or cancerous, wherein the test sample is selected from the group consisting of breast, ovarian, bladder, colon, and lung tissue, thereby generating data for a test gene copy number; and

b) comparing the test gene copy number to data for a control gene copy number obtained from a corresponding tissue, wherein a detectable ~~an~~ amplification of the gene in the test sample relative to the control suggests ~~indicates~~ the presence of a precancerous lesion or a cancer in the human mammal.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the control gene copy number is two copies per cell.

3-134. (canceled)

135. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the detectable amplification is at least three-fold.

136. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the detectable amplification is at least four-fold.

137. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the detectable amplification is at least five-fold.

138. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the detectable amplification is at least 10-fold.